1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

593 Both parents have an equal responsibility in
• 861 the upbringing of their children—a frequent source of conjugal dispute. Children are expected to respect their parents and are severely criticized, or even ostracized, if they do not conform. Schebesta (1948, 323) quotes the case of a son who lifted his hand against his father who drew his bow and arrow and threatened to kill him; the group forced the son to leave the camp with his family.

606 Restrictions on relations between affines such as a mother-in-law and her son-in-law, or a father-in-law and daughter-in-law, are known to the archers, and practiced to a certain extent among those in the north, but are largely ignored by others in the southeast. The restrictions may amount to total avoidance.

Daily Life

512 The main essence of the daily routine has already been covered. It is primarily concerned with food. The archer women and men are allotted to gathering and hunting, respectively,
514 which occupy most of their time. Refuse from
264 the food is thrown behind the hut, and elimina-
361 tion takes place close by, two factors favoring the frequent moving of camp.

[P. 177-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1961-1965) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

(ARCHERS)

[P.179-A] ADOLESCENCE

858 Only when children approach the age of
573 puberty does the very close family solidarity begin to weaken. Girls fall more under the influence of their mothers; boys, under that of their lineage. At this age also, the sexes are segregated for the first time. Young boys of different families cease following their mothers and sisters and group themselves to organize hunts for rats, mice, and other small slow game in the neighborhood of the camp. Tree climbing is also a favorite sport among the boys. But while the boys become more alienated from their mothers, the young girls continue to be as closely attached to them as ever, though, like the boys, they tend to group together with others of the
[864] same age (and older). During this period there is no formal training (Schebesta, 1948, 415 ff.), but boys and girls alike learn all there is to be learned by simple emulation and by assisting their parents and elders in various tasks.

882 At puberty the boys break completely away
883 from their mothers who have no more to do with them, writes Schebesta (1948, 424), than cook their meals. The adolescent girls develop their flirtatious ways, the boys develop their ability as hunters, and thus both prepare themselves for married life.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 218-B]

being confined to their beds for three days, as mentioned by Schebesta (1952), they were made to move about continually by the villager instructors. The boys' fathers, who were present at all times, frequently comforted their sons, apparently to the annoyance of the villagers. There was, however, no question of the savagery implied by Schebesta. During the following two months the boys were strictly disciplined. There was a process of physical training that was undeniably tough, but it fulfilled only one of the major purposes of the *nkumbi*, namely, to fit boys for adult life. The Mbuti fathers, however, obviously had different ideas as to how far this discipline should be carried and criticized the villagers when they carried it too far. Further, when there were no villagers in the camp, the Mbuti talked quite openly and showed by their speech and their behavior that they had no respect for the taboos associated with the festival. It seemed quite evident that they consciously underwent the *nkumbi*, not because of any religious significance, but because it gave them status in villager society, in which any uncircumcised youth is a laughing stock. The important thing, then, was the circumcision, for this specific purpose.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 253-C]
the major aspects of life in the initiation camp, including some of the ordeals. They not only knew the initiation songs, but were taught them by their mothers, who even more than their uninitiated male children were supposed to be in complete ignorance of such matters.

When the *ganza* moved to the forest, the instructors did not come with them, and the *ganza* had only occasional visits from one villager who stayed in the nearby Mbuti hunting camp. There were no ordeals during this time, no singing except when visited by the solitary villager, and no other form of instruction by the Pygmies to replace that of the villagers. The boys did not accompany the hunt. It seemed to be, for both children and the adult members of the *ganza*, a holiday camp, free from the rigors of the initiation school.

But if the Mbuti showed no respect for the ceremonial or ritual significance of the *nkumbi*, they could scarcely avoid respecting the physical discipline imposed by the various ordeals they had to undergo. This was a frequent topic

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

of conversation. Both by their conversation and their behavior they showed that they were well aware of the benefit of this training for the children. The older men talked of ordeals that their "fathers" had experienced (apparently without reference to any villager *nkumbi*) in order to make them into men and hunters (both terms were used). They were always critical of any sign of excessive harshness on the part of the villager instructors and protected their children from it. But, on the other hand, the fathers showed no sympathy for a boy who could not endure the normal rigors of camp life and accept the routine ordeals without complaint, and it will be remembered that the boy who became ill himself insisted on returning to his place among the other boys before he had completely recovered (Turnbull, 1957).

It is, at the moment, an open question whether the Mbuti respect the physical discipline of the *nkumbi* because of its effect on the boys, or because of the status it gives their children in the eyes of the villagers, under normal circumstances equating the Mbuti (at least in terms of manliness) with their fellow villager initiates. The fact that no ordeals were practiced in the forest camp is perhaps an indication that the Mbuti do not lay very much stress on the physical and mental training aspect of the *nkumbi*. These are, in any case, benefits that

[D 253-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

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they could quite well achieve in their own way. Such practical benefits as there may be do not demonstrate why the Mbuti should participate in the villager *nkumbi* any more than does the often alleged subordination of the Mbuti to villager authority and custom. The obvious rejection by the Mbuti of the significance attributed to the *nkumbi* by the villager and the relatively passive acceptance by the villager of this rejection serve only to emphasize the hiatus between the two people. They certainly do not demonstrate that the *nkumbi* serves to draw them closer together or to assert the authority of the villager over the Pygmy.

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This hiatus becomes even more evident when we consider the religious aspect of the *nkumbi*, as far as the Mbuti are concerned. It is a hiatus not only between two ways of living but between two ways of thinking, and it shows that we are dealing with two totally different sets of values. What the *nkumbi* achieves for the village boy bears little resemblance to what it achieves for the Pygmy. Ceremonial, ritual, and magic are ways of interpreting or influencing the supernatural in terms of the natural, and in his forest environment the Pygmy has relatively little need of either. It is not surprising then that his attitude to the ceremonial and ritual of the *nkumbi* differs from that of the villager. To

St Turnbull E-6 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

THE GIVER OF THE LAW

One of the huts was in flames, and people were standing all around, either crying or shouting. There was a lot of struggling going on among a small group of men, and women were brandishing fists in each other's faces. We decided to go back to the main camp, which by then was filled with clusters of men and women standing about discussing the affair. Not long afterward a contingent from Cephu's group came over. They swore at the children, who, delighted by the whole thing, were imitating the epic flight and pursuit of Kelemoke. The adults, in no joking frame of mind, sat down to have a discussion. But the talking did not center around Kelemoke's act so much as around the burning of the hut. Almost everyone seemed to dismiss the act of incest. One of Kelemoke's uncles, Masalito, with whom he had been staying since his father died, had great tears rolling down his cheeks. He said, "Kelemoke only did what any youth would do, and he has been caught and driven to the forest. The forest will kill him. That is finished. But my own brother has burned down my hut and I have nowhere to sleep. I shall be cold. And what if it rains? I shall die of cold and rain at the hands of my brother."

The brother, Aberi, instead of taking up the point that Kelemoke had dishonored his daughter, made a feeble protestation that he had been insulted. Kelemoke should have taken more care. And Masalito should have taught him better. This started the argument off on different lines, and both families quarreled bitterly, accusing each other for more than an hour. Then the elders began to yawn and say they were tired; they wanted to go to sleep; we would settle it the next day.

For a long time that night the camp was alive with whispered remarks, and not a few rude jokes were thrown about from one hut to another. The next day I went over to Cephu's camp and found the girl's mother busy helping to rebuild Masalito's hut; the two men were sitting down and talking as though nothing much had happened.

Tumbull S-5 (1951-1960) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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The Play World of the BaMbuti

IN THE FOREST life appears to be free and easy, happy-go-lucky, with a certain amount of perpetual disorder as a result. But in fact, beneath all that there is order and reason; reaching everywhere is the firm, controlling hand of the forest itself.

If individual responsibility and authority are shunned and dispersed in other aspects of Pygmy life, as in the maintenance of law and order, a similar pattern appears in the upbringing of children. It is no accident that a child calls everyone in the same age group as his parents "father" or "mother"; those still older are called "grandparent." Those of the same age as himself he refers to by a

St Turnbull E-S (1951-1968) 1982 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

term which could be translated as either "brother" or "sister," and anyone younger is "child," though more often they are just called by name. In this way a Pygmy camp is much less formal than most African societies, where there are not only different terms of address and reference for different degrees of relationship, but also correspondingly different modes of behavior that are enforced at all times.

During the day one Pygmy camp looks much like another. The sun filters down through the trees and brightens the camp with shafts of spiraling light as it catches the columns of smoke drifting lazily upward. This is what makes a camp look so full of life at midday, even when most people are out on the hunt and those that have stayed behind are dozing in the shade of their little leaf huts. The light has a life of its own, and after it has danced down the coils of blue smoke it seems to leap from place to place on the leafy floor of the camp as the trees sway in the breeze high above. And when you listen you hear life in myriad forms all around—birds, monkeys, bees; the rustling of a nearby stream and the never-ending voice of the forest itself. It continually whispers assurances that all is well, that the forest is looking after its children.

In a village the heat of day is unbearably, suffocatingly oppressive, but in the forest it is just warm enough to make you want to stretch out and bask in the dancing, shady sunlight, like other living creatures. But the Pygmies have learned from the animals around them to doze with one eye open, and a sleepy midday camp can become filled in a minute with shouts and yells and tearful protestations as a baby, crawling around this warm, friendly world, gets into a bed of hot ashes, or a column of army ants. In a moment he will be surrounded by angry adults and given a sound slapping, then carried unceremoniously back to the safety of a hut. It does not matter much which hut, because as far as the child is concerned all adults are his parents or grandparents. They are all equally likely to slap him for doing

St Turnbull B-6 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

wrong, or fondle him and feed him with delicacies if he is quiet and gives them no trouble. He knows his real mother and father, of course, and has a special affection for them and they for him, but from an early age he learns that he is the child of them all, for they are all children of the forest.

When a hunting party goes off there are always people left in the camp—usually some of the older men and women, some children, and perhaps one or two younger men and women. The children always have their own playground, called *bopi*, a few yards off from the main camp. At Apa Lelo it was on the shore where the river twisted around an island and one branch of it cut in almost between Cephu's camp and the main camp. The water was fairly shallow there, and all day long the children splashed and wallowed about to their heart's content. If they tired of that, they had a couple of vine swings in their bopi; one was a small one for younger children, and the other was hung from two tall trees. Infants watched with envy as the older children swung wildly about, climbing high up on the vine strands and performing all sorts of acrobatics.

There were always trees for the youngsters to climb, and this is one of the main sports even for those not yet old enough to walk properly. The great game is for half a dozen or more children to climb to the top of a young tree, bending it down until its top touches the ground. Then they all leap off at once, and if anyone is too slow he goes flying back upward as the tree springs upright, to the jeers and laughter of his friends.

Like children everywhere, Pygmy children love to imitate their adult idols. This is the beginning of their schooling, for the adults will always encourage and help them. What else is there for them to learn except to grow into good adults? So a fond father will make a tiny bow for his son, and arrows of soft wood with blunt points. He may also give him a strip of a hunting net. A mother will delight herself and her daughter by weaving a miniature carrying basket. At

THE PLAY WORLD OF THE BAMBUTI

At an early age boys and girls are "playing house." They solemnly collect the sticks and leaves, and while the girl is building a miniature house the boy prowls around with his bow and arrow. He will eventually find a stray plantain or an ear of corn which he will shoot at and proudly carry back. With equal solemnity it is cooked and eaten, and the two may even sleep the sleep of innocence in the hut they have made.

They will also play at hunting, the boys stretching out their little bits of net while the girls beat the ground with bunches of leaves and drive some poor tired old frog in toward the boys. If they can't find a frog they go and awaken one of their grandparents and ask him to play at being an antelope. He is then pursued all over the camp, twisting and dodging among the huts and the trees, until finally the young hunters trap their quarry in the net, and with shouts of delight pounce on him, beating him lovingly with their little fists. Then they roll over and over in a tangle with the net until they are exhausted.

For children, life is one long frolic interspersed with a healthy sprinkle of spankings and slappings. Sometimes these seem unduly severe, but it is all part of their training. And one day they find that the games they have been playing are not games any longer, but the real thing, for they have become adults. Their hunting is now real hunting; their tree climbing is in earnest search of inaccessible honey; their acrobatics on the swings are repeated almost daily, in other forms, in the pursuit of elusive game, or in avoiding the malicious forest buffalo. It happens so gradually that they hardly notice the change at first, for even when they are proud and famous hunters their life is still full of fun and laughter.

While the children are playing about in their bopi, safely out of the way, yet close enough not to be able to fall into any real danger,

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

though there are certain restrictions connected with it. In fact, the Pygmies consider that any couple that really wants to have children should "sleep with the moon."

So when a young Pygmy girl begins to flower into maturity, and blood comes to her for the first time, it comes to her as a gift, received with gratitude and rejoicing—rejoicing that the girl is now a potential mother, that she can now proudly and rightfully take a husband. There is no mention of fear or superstition, and everyone is told the good news.

The girl enters seclusion, but not the seclusion of the village girl. She takes with her all her young friends, those who have not yet reached maturity, and some older ones.

In the house of the elima the girls celebrate the happy event together. Together they are taught the arts and crafts of motherhood by an old and respected relative. They learn not only how to live like adults, but how to sing the songs of adult women. Day after day, night after night, the elima house resounds with the throaty contralto of the older women and the high, piping voices of the youngest. It is a time of gladness and happiness, not for the women alone but for the whole people. Pygmies from all around come to pay their respects, the young men standing or sitting about outside the elima house in the hopes of a glimpse of the young beauties inside. And there are special elima songs which they sing to one another, the girls singing a light, cascading melody in intricate harmony, the men replying with a rich, vital chorus. For the Pygmies the elima is one of the happiest, most joyful occasions in their lives.

And so it was with happiness that we all heard that not one but two girls in our camp had been blessed by the moon.

At first it was just Akidinimba, daughter of Manyalibo's sister. Akidinimba was a notorious flirt who considered herself the most beautiful girl in the world. She was just sufficiently plump to be envied by less well-endowed girls, but not so plump that her maidenly

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

VILLAGE INITIATION AND MAGIC

During the succeeding months—usually two or three now instead of the former six or even twelve—the boys are subjected to one form of mild torture after another. The torture is sometimes mental rather than physical. For instance, one boy, whose father refused point blank to have anything to do with what he called "an empty, savage custom" but allowed his son to enter, was made to ridicule his father almost every daylight hour. The gentle little Sansiwake, who insisted on getting up from the hard wooden bed to rejoin his companions long before he was completely well, was made to pretend that he was big and strong, carrying heavy loads and imitating the performance of acts degrading to any Pygmy, but particularly so to this sensitive child. Each boy was put through some torture of this nature.

The physical ordeals sometimes start out as games but develop into cruel tests of physical endurance. A crouching dance that might be fun for a few minutes becomes agony after half an hour. A mild switching on the underside of the arm with light sticks is of no concern until, after several days, the skin becomes raw. And then the villagers notch the sticks so that they fold over and pinch the skin sharply, often drawing blood. When the boys have become used to being beaten with leafy branches, thorny bushes are substituted.

To the Pygmies this all seems harsh and unnecessary, and as far as their own children are concerned they keep a strict watch over them to see that the villagers do not go to the length that they sometimes do with village children, even if this brings them into some contempt. But to the villager this toughening-up process is essential and does not come naturally in the course of village life. The child has to be fitted for adult life, and this is what the nkumbi sets out to achieve. In a few months a boy becomes a man, tough and strong, physically and mentally. The process is not a pleasant one, but it is the only way in which, under tribal conditions, the goal can be achieved.

The Pygmy can understand and appreciate this, but the very nature of his own nomadic hunting and gathering existence provides

3: Tumbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

C
881 all the toughening up and education that are needed. Children begin
563 climbing trees sometimes before they can walk. Their muscles de-
866 velop, and they overcome fear in a number of daring tree games.
861 P Adult activities are learned from an early age by observation and
881 imitation, for the Pygmies live an open life. Their life is as open
177 inside their tiny one-room leaf huts as it is in the middle of a forest
866 clearing, and so the children have no need of the sex instruction
• 861 which forms so large a part of the teaching given to village boys during the nkumbi.

P The Pygmies themselves say that the toughening-up effect of the
881 nkumbi is salutary, though they openly deplore and frequently reject
885 its severity. And when this particular nkumbi was over, the change
177 in every one of the eight boys was plain to see. But this is not their major reason for allowing themselves to be subjected to village initiation, nor is there any question of their being subjected by force. They enter the nkumbi voluntarily because they are a proud people. They live necessarily in contact with the villagers and spend a number of weeks every year either in a village or among villagers. The latter regard any adult who is not initiated as a child; he is treated with no more respect, accorded no more privileges, and he cannot take part in any adult activities. By entering the nkumbi the Pygmies prove their adulthood to the villagers the only way they can. When the initiation was over even Sansiwake had the right to enter any adult baraza and take part in the proceedings. This is what the Pygmies want from the nkumbi, and what they get—the status of adults in village eyes.

P There are many things in their behavior to show that the nkumbi
881 means no more than this to them, quite apart from their deliberate
882 lack of respect for the laws of the nkumbi and their irreverence to-
177 ward everything that is sacred to the villager. When this particular nkumbi was over and everyone returned to the forest, the same boys who had been walking freely among the men of the village, as men, went straight back to their mothers. They became children once more